measures for removing the evils complained of.

Reply.—The contract seems to have been given to outside companies owing to the want of sufficient demand here. Government regret that, until the expiry of the present contract which lasts for five years more, they are unable to do anything in the matter, so far as the water depots included in this contract are concerned. The other depots are, of course, open to the general public. The suggestions made by the last speaker will be considered when the time for it comes.

125. Permission to the ryots to take from the forests, free of charge, manure leaves and timber required for making agricultural implements.

Mr. M. Madhavan Tampi (*Kalkulam*) observed that this was one of the subjects brought up at the last session of the Assembly when it was prayed that people might be either permitted to cut trees for this purpose free of charge or take the requisite timber from Sirkar depôts on payment of actual expense. Permission should also be given for gathering manure leaves *gratis*. The member understood that orders had been recently issued for setting apart some tracts from which manure leaves could be freely collected, but wished that the public might be informed as to what these tracts were.

Reply.—No general provision can be made, but wherever necessary and feasible, Government will consider the desirability of reducing the number of reserved trees or moving back the boundaries of reserves for the benefit of the agricultural population in particular localities.

IV. Communications.

126. Close scrutiny of the Public Works Department estimates.

Mr. K. S. Shanmukham Pillai (*Agricultural Improvement Association, South Travancore*) remarked that the present scrutiny by Government of estimates submitted by the Public Works Department was not sufficient.

Reply.—In professional matters, it is neither seemly nor desirable to interfere with such estimates which have passed through several professional hands under the control of the responsible head of the department. Where, however, the scheme or estimate appears

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